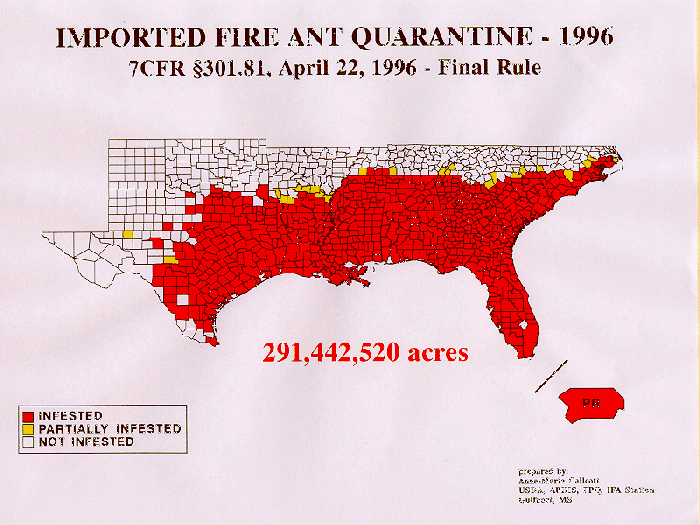
Red Imported Fire Ant

Scientific Name-Solenopsis invicta

*They are tiny ants that measure about 1/16th inch long. They are a pale orange color with a black gaster. This species of ant tend to move extremely slowly. The mandible has four distinct teeth and the antennae are 10- segmented, ending in a two segmented club. A sting is present at the tip of the gaster.1* 

*This species of ant is native to South America. It was introduced to the United States in the 1930’s. As of today, it has taken over more than 320 million acres in 12 states in the southeastern U.S and Puerto Rico. It has also invaded New Zealand, Bahamas, Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, and much more. The Red Imported Fire Ant was introduced accidentally in ships’ ballast.*



They have nearly one- quarter million workers in their settlement. Virtually 100,000 new queens per year can be produced in every acre of bug-ridden land. Winged reproductive males called alates are produced once a colony is a year old. As many as 4,500 alates join winged reproductive female alates which are considered the new queens, to produce the new offspring. They do this act about 200 feet in the air. The males die shortly after and the fertilized females establish new colonies. The queen then, loses her wings and burrows underground to lay eggs in peace. The ruler will usually lay 10-15 eggs which hatch and develop into a group of female workers. This normally occurs within 8-10 days after laying the offspring. She will feed the first group of young larvae regurgitated from her crop, trophic eggs or secretions from her salivary glands. 2



They are capable of causing a dramatic decrease in the native ant population. The fire ant is also responsible for crop damage and damage to electrical equipment. The Agricultural Research Service has estimated the annual costs in terms of damage and population management control at more than $6.5 billion.

The fire ant builds mounds made of soil, which normally are not larger than 46 cm in diameter. When a mound is disturbed, ants surface uncompromisingly to bite and sting the intruder .3 White pustule usually appears the next day at the site of the sting.



Foraging workers- They normally eat dead animals such as, insects, earthworms, and vertebrates. The ants will accumulate honeydew and will scavenge for sweets, proteins and fats found with-in a home. The workers have a propensity to be attracted to dirty laundry.

Larvae- The newest members of the family are only fed liquid diets until they reach their third instar. When the larvae reach the fourth instar, they are finally able to digest solid food. 4 As the young ants reach that point, the worker ants will bring solid food rich in protein and deposit it in a depression in front of the mouth of the larvae. The larvae will secrete digestive enzymes that break down the solid food and regurgitate it back toworker ants.4



Queen- The queen eats some of the digested protein to support egg fabrication. As long as she has enough food, she will continue to produce eggs.



The life Span of The Red Imported Fire Ant

Minor Workers- about 30 to 60 days

Media Workers- 60 to 90 days

Major workers- 90 to 180 days

Queens- 2-6 years

Work Cited

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